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**Programme of the Polish Presidency  
of the Council of the European Union**

1 July 2011 – 31 December 2011

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## Strategic framework

The European Union is changing at a pace and scope not seen for a long time. The economic crisis – the underlying cause of these changes – has also demonstrated the strength of European integration. By pulling together, Europe has overcome the shock wave of the crisis. The European Union is still facing enormous challenges. Our societies are ageing, the model of the welfare state needs to be changed and economic growth, stifled by crisis, puts additional pressure on public finances.

Europe also needs to focus more on the international situation and take coherent measures as the economic and political importance of other regions of the world continues to rise. The European Union should act with determination in relations with its neighbours. The European Union's

operations need to be put on a more stable footing, aligned with the new treaty framework. Further practical implementation of the Lisbon Treaty provisions will take place in the second half of 2011. The Polish Presidency will venture into new areas where – pursuant to the Lisbon Treaty provisions – the European Union has more scope for engagement.

The scale of the challenges confronting Europe requires deeper integration and intense cooperation to support economic growth. For our measures to be effective there has to be a synergy between European and national activities. Europe can be strong, but it has to pull together in the face of numerous challenges. We need to show Europeans that the European Union can act effectively. Over the next two years decisions will

be made on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), deeper economic integration and the long-term goals of EU foreign policy. We will need to analyse and modernise the most important EU policies: the Cohesion Policy, the Common Agricultural Policy, the programme for financing research and innovation, funds for culture, the media, the construction of trans-European networks and many other instruments. The Polish Presidency will aim to put the European Union on the path to faster development and will focus on three priorities:

- European Integration as a Source of Growth
- Secure Europe
- Europe Benefiting from Openness.



## Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

### **Demographic challenges, health and consumer protection**

#### **Employment and social policy**

The Presidency's employment and social policy priorities will be as follows:

- Intergenerational solidarity: towards Europe's demographic future;
- Active Europe (A working Europe);
- Civic partnership: public authorities and non-governmental organisations in the implementation of social policy goals.

In the framework of the Intergenerational solidarity: The Demographic Future of Europe area, the Presidency will promote measures facilitating work-life balance, including improved access to childcare and elderly care services, increasing and extending the professional activity of different social groups, improving the profitability of mobility in the labour market, and increasing the importance of social dialogue for the achievement of social policy goals. Work will continue on revising Directive 92/85/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding. Work will also

be initiated on work-life balance, to be prepared by the European Institute for Gender Equality. The work-life balance issue will be reflected in the conclusions worked out by the Council.

In implementing the Active Europe priority, the Presidency will launch a debate on the *flexicurity* model's impact on the level of employment, especially among older people. The debate will also concern the positive aspects of occupational activity. A review of the factors motivating and demotivating employees to maintain and prolong their occupational activity will be carried out during our Presidency. Within this priority, the Presidency will attempt to assess the extent to which the economic crisis has contributed to labour market reforms, and will propose an outlook for the future of the European labour market after 2020. The outcome of this debate will be reflected in the Council conclusions. Moreover, the Polish Presidency will hold negotiations on amendments to the regulation establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to be proposed by the European Commission.

Civic partnership: public authorities and non-governmental organisations in the implementation of social policy goals – in this area the Presidency will initiate a debate on the role and importance of non-governmental organisations and other partners in the implementation of social policy.

A discussion will take place on virtual volunteering as an innovative instru-

ment enabling implementation of social goals and its further development. An important event that will coincide with Poland's Presidency of the EU Council will be the summing up of the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

### **Strengthening the role of consumers, ensuring consumer safety and more effective protection**

Consumer protection policy at EU level is an important part of internal market functioning. If the common market functions well, consumers will have greater confidence in international transactions, which will positively impact competition and prices and, in effect, bring benefits to all EU citizens. Enhanced consumer protection aims to implement this goal and strives to create a genuine internal market for the exchange of consumer goods. With this in mind, the Presidency will assess the implementation of the Consumer Policy Strategy 2007-2013 and will start work on a new **Consumer Policy Strategy 2014-2020**, which will set out the challenges of the European Union in the field of consumer protection for the coming years.

The Polish Presidency will organise the **European Competition and Consumer Day**, which will bring together the heads of European consumer and competition protection agencies. Partners from Ukraine and Russia will be invited to participate in the conference.

## Health

In the area of public health, special emphasis will be placed on **reducing the gaps in health status of the European Union's population.**

In this respect, the Presidency will firstly pay attention to actions targeting the determinants of health, especially nutrition and physical activity, mainly through prevention, health promotion and education.

Secondly, in the area of chronic diseases, the Presidency will focus on the prevention and control of respiratory diseases in children. Thirdly, the Presidency will address topics that help to better detect and treat communication disorders in children through e-health and an innovative approach to treatment and enhanced cooperation between countries. A special discussion will be held on the need to develop instruments and screening

tests, and to create a network of institutions that would monitor health outcomes leading to prevention and adequate treatment of such diseases and the creation of better conditions for later stages in life, as well as easier integration of patients afflicted by such diseases into social and economic life.

The Presidency also intends to **continue actions aimed at preventing and treating brain and neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's disease.** Such actions are of great significance for Europe's ageing populations and the social and economic challenges facing Member States. In this context, a special debate will be held on setting priorities in brain research, innovative diagnostics, the treatment and the organisation of care, and the social integration of the elderly afflicted by such diseases.

The Presidency, depending on the Member States' needs and the positions, also plans to address the following topics: partnership for innovation to promote healthy and active ageing, e-health, antibiotic resistance and ensuring that patients have access to reliable information about prescription medicinal products.

The proposal currently under discussion for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers should ensure that consumers have important and reliable information which would permit them to make the right choices. During work on this proposal, the Polish Presidency will aim for a compromise. Efforts will also be undertaken to reach agreement regarding work on a proposed regulation on foods for particular nutritional uses which is scheduled to begin during the Polish Presidency.



## Appendix. Calendar of ministerial meetings

### July

5 – 6 July	Health Ministers' Meeting (informal), Sopot
6 – 7 July	Eastern Dimension of Mobility Conference, Warsaw
7 – 8 July	Employment and Social Policy Ministers' Meeting (informal), Sopot
8 July	Meeting of the members of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland and the EU College of Commissioners, Warsaw
11 – 12 July	Environment Council (informal), Sopot
12 July	Economic & Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN), Brussels
13 – 15 July	High-Level Meeting on Energy, Bełchatów
14 – 15 July	Development Ministers' Meeting (informal), Sopot
16 July	Ministerial Conference on the Use of Agricultural Biomass for Energy Purposes as an Important Element of the Common Agricultural Policy, Sopot
18 July	General Affairs Council (GAC), Brussels
18 July	Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), Brussels
18 – 19 July	Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH), Brussels
18 – 19 July	Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA; informal), Sopot
18 – 19 July	Conference on Promotion of Equal Opportunities Through Sport as an Element of Social Policy, Wrocław
18 – 20 July	Conference on Cultural Competence, Warsaw
20 July	Conference ahead of the Competitiveness Council (informal) on the European Research Area, Sopot
20 – 22 July	Competitiveness Council (COMPET; informal), Sopot
22 July	Economic and Financial Affairs Council – Budget (ECOFIN Budget), (poss.) Brussels
25 – 26 July	EU- US Senior Officials Meeting, Cracow
28 – 29 July	Meeting of Ministers for European Affairs (informal), Sopot

### September

2 – 3 September	Foreign Ministers' Meeting (GYMNICH format), Sopot
5 September	Conference on the Social Responsibility of Business, Gdańsk
5 – 6 September	Meeting of Transport Ministers (informal), Sopot
6 – 7 September	IV Investment Forum, Tarnów
8 – 11 September	European Culture Congress, Wrocław

- 9 September Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Audiovisual Policy (informal), Wrocław
- 9 September Expanding single European market to the Eastern Partners - giving mutual boost to our economic growth - new concept for neighbourhood policy, Krynica Zdrój
- 11 – 13 September Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH; informal), Wrocław
- 12 September General Affairs Council (GAC), Brussels
- 12 September e-volunteering Conference, Warsaw
- 13 – 14 September Conference “From Volunteer to Sport Leader”, Warsaw
- 14 – 16 September Eurofi Financial Forum (accompanying event), Wrocław
- 15 September Ministerial Conference of the Ministry of the Economy on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Poland’s Membership of the OECD, Warsaw
- 16 – 17 September Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN; informal), Wrocław
- 17 – 18 September European Congress of Women, Warsaw
- 19 – 20 September Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH), Brussels
- 19 – 20 September Transportation, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE – Energy; informal), Wrocław
- 22 – 23 September Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA), Brussels
- 22 – 23 September Meeting of Ministers for National Defence (informal), Wrocław
- 26 September Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) – Trade Ministers Formation, Brussels
- 26 September Formal lunch of Ministers of Trade, Brussels
- 26 September Ministerial Conference of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy on the social priority: “Social Impact of the Economic Crisis. Short- and Long-Term Measures of the Anti-Crisis Policy”, Wrocław
- 26 – 28 September Enterprise Europe Network Annual Conference, Warsaw
- 28 – 29 September Ministerial Conference “Forestry for Climate and Biodiversity” combined with a meeting of Directors for Forests and Nature Conservation, Ryn
- 29 – 30 September Eastern Partnership Summit, Warsaw
- 29 – 30 September Competitiveness Council (COMPET), Brussels

## October

- 3 October Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), Luxembourg
- 2 - 4 October Single Market Forum (SIMFO), Cracow
- 3 - 4 October EU – Western Balkans Ministerial Forum, Ohrid
- 4 October Economic & Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN), Luxembourg
- 5 - 6 October Tourism Ministers’ Meeting (Informal), Cracow
- 5 - 7 October European Tourism Forum, Cracow
- 6 October Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council – Transport (TTE- Transport), Luxembourg
- 10 October Environment Council (ENVI), Luxembourg
- 10 – 11 October Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), Luxembourg
- 10 – 11 October Ministerial Energy Conference and General Assembly of the Council of European Energy Regulators on “Competitive and integrated market as a guarantee of energy security”, Cracow
- 10 – 11 October Russia-EU Permanent Partnership Council on Freedom, Security and Justice, Warsaw
- 10 – 11 October Ministerial Conference of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy on Challenges and Opportunities for Employment opportunities in Changing Demographics, Warsaw
- 10 – 11 October Meeting of EU Ministers for Education (informal), Gdańsk
- 11 October General Affairs Council (GAC), Luxembourg

- 11 – 12 October European Heritage Forum, Wrocław
- 11 – 12 October Conference in preparation for the Rio+20 Global Summit, Warsaw
- 13 – 14 October Sports Ministers' Meeting (Informal), Cracow
- 17 October Tripartite Social Summit, Brussels
- 17 – 18 October Convention of the European Platform Against Poverty, Cracow
- 17 – 18 October EUROPEAN COUNCIL, Brussels
- 18 – 19 October Ministerial Conference "Development of the European Statistical System in light of the Eastern Partnership – Directions and Strategy", Cracow
- 19 – 20 October Ministerial Conference "Perspectives for Development of the Electronic Communications Market in the European Union", Warsaw
- 19 – 20 October European Congress on Rural Development, Warsaw
- 19 – 21 October Conference of Heads of Customs Services in the framework of the EU's Eastern Partnership Programme, Kraków
- 20 – 21 October Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH), Luxembourg
- 20 – 21 October Union for the Mediterranean Senior Officials' Meeting, Cracow
- 20 – 21 October Meeting of Ministers for Family and Gender Equality (informal), Cracow
- 20 – 21 October Conference in cooperation with the Academy of European Law in Trier - Cross-border insolvency, Trier
- 24 – 25 October Transport Ministers' Meeting on Eastern Partnership, Cracow
- 24 – 26 October EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Forum and the Baltic Development Forum, Gdańsk
- 25 – 26 October European Migration Network Conference, Warsaw
- 26 – 27 October Conference on the Implementation of the LMI initiative and the European Partnership Initiative (EPI), Warsaw
- 27 – 28 October Ministerial Conference "Approximation of Veterinary, Phytosanitary and Food Quality and Safety Legislation in Eastern Partnership Countries with European Union Law", Cracow
- 27 – 28 October Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA), Luxembourg

## November

- 3 – 4 November Second Prague Process Ministerial Conference – Building Migration Partnerships in Action, Poznań
- 7 November EU-USA Ministerial Meeting in Justice and home affairs area, Washington
- 7 – 8 November Ministerial Conference "Solidarity in Health – Closing the Health Gap between European Union Member States", Poznań
- 8 November Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN), Brussels
- 9 – 10 November Conference on European Contract Law, Warsaw
- 14 November Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), Brussels
- 14 – 15 November Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH), Brussels
- 14 – 15 November 5<sup>th</sup> Equality Summit, Poznań
- 15 November General Affairs Council (GAC), Brussels
- 15 November European Economic Area (EEA) Council, on the margin of the GAC, Brussels
- 17 November Meeting of Ministers for e-government, Poznań
- 17 – 18 November 6<sup>th</sup> European Ministerial Conference and Exhibition on e-administration "Borderless eGovernment Services for Europeans", Poznań
- 18 November Economic and Financial Affairs Council – Budget (ECOFIN Budget), Brussels
- 21 – 22 November Fundamental Rights Conference 2011, Warsaw

- 23 – 24 November REACH Fifth Anniversary Conference, Warsaw
- 24 November Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council – Energy (TTE - Energy), Brussels
- 24 November Ministerial Conference “Integrated Approach to Development - Key to Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth”, Poznań
- 24 – 25 November European Competition and Consumer Day, Poznań
- 25 November Meeting of Ministers for Regional Policy, Cohesion, Territorial Cohesion and Urban Development (informal), Poznań
- 28 - 29 November Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council (EYCS), Brussels
- 30 November Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN), Brussels

## December

- 1 December Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), Brussels
- 1 December Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), Brussels
- 1 – 2 December High-level Conference for Southern Neighbourhood countries, Warsaw
- 2 December Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council – Health (EPSCO- Health), Brussels
- 5 December General Affairs Council (GAC) (TBC), Brussels
- 5 – 6 December Competitiveness Council (COMPET), Brussels
- 5 – 6 December Space Council on the margin of the Competition Council (COMPET) (poss.), Brussels
- 5 – 6 December Conference on the financial aspects of legal aid in criminal matters in the EU Member States, Warsaw
- 9 December EUROPEAN COUNCIL, Brussels
- 12 December Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council – Transport (TTE - Transport), Brussels
- 13 December Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council – Telecommunications (TTE – Telecom.), Brussels
- 13 – 14 December Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA), Brussels
- 15 – 16 December Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH), Brussels
- 15 – 16 December European Development Days, Warsaw
- 16 December General Affairs Council (GAC) on Cohesion Policy (poss.), Brussels
- 16 December Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) on the margin of the WTO ministerial conference (poss.), Geneva
- 19 December Environment Council (ENVI), Brussels



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NOTE

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from:	The future Polish, Danish and Cypriot Presidencies
to:	Delegations
Subject:	18 month programme of the Council (1 July 2011 - 31 December 2012)

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Delegations will find attached the final version of the 18 month programme of the Council, prepared by the future Polish, Danish and Cypriot Presidencies.

Contributions regarding the External Relations activities of the Foreign Affairs Council have not been communicated by the President of this Council formation.

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PROGRAMME OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES  
PREPARED BY THE POLISH, DANISH AND CYPRIOT PRESIDENCIES  
and in close cooperation with the Commission and the President  
of the European Council

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the Council's work programme as established by the future Polish, Danish and Cypriot Presidencies, covering the period July 2011 to December 2012. It is presented in two parts. The first part contains the strategic framework for the programme, setting it in a wider context, and specifically within the perspective of more long-term objectives running into the subsequent three Presidencies. For this reason, in accordance with the Council's rules of procedure, the future Irish, Lithuanian and Greek Presidencies have been consulted on this section. The second part constitutes the operational programme setting out the issues which are expected to be addressed during the 18 month period. In line with the Council's Rules of Procedure, this part was prepared in close cooperation with the Commission and the President of the European Council, however the President of the Foreign Affairs Council has not communicated contributions with regard to this Council formation's activities.

The three Presidencies will make every effort to ensure a smooth and efficient functioning of the new rules and provisions introduced by the Lisbon Treaty and to use to the full all the possibilities it offers. This implies a very close cooperation between the three Presidencies and between them and the President of the European Council and the High Representative. At the same time, the Presidencies will rely very much on a mutually beneficial cooperation with the Commission and are looking forward to the input provided by the Commission on the basis of its respective work programmes. They will also work very closely and constructively together with the European Parliament, whose role has been greatly enhanced by the Treaty of Lisbon.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

1. The three Presidencies will assume their function in a period which will still be marked by the consequences of the financial, economic and sovereign debt crisis. Consequently an important part of the action of the EU during that period will aim to equip the EU and its Member States with the means to thoroughly recover from the crisis and to return to sound macro-economic conditions. In this context, a key challenge will be to pursue budget consolidation and to create the best possible conditions for a sustainable long-term growth and high employment. At the same time the after effects of the economic crisis on the employment situation and the social sphere need to be addressed effectively. In order to ensure the solidity and sustainability of the Euro area and to enhance competitiveness across the EU, a strengthened economic governance framework, which aims at better coordinated and converging economic policies, will need to be implemented and fine-tuned.
2. The need to respond to the crisis, while at the same time laying the foundations for future growth, represents a good opportunity to foster a comprehensive revitalisation of EU policies - a revitalisation that should ensure that the EU achieves the long-term policy goals that have been formulated in the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Most of the efforts will have to be made at national level and will require further structural reforms in Member States. The EU will monitor these developments and contribute to the set objectives through its policies.
3. Throughout the 18 months, the negotiations on the new Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF), which will determine the funding of EU policies from 2014 onwards, will be a key priority. The aim will be to match the content and resources of the new MFF with agreed priorities of the EU and to promote in an adequate manner the economic, social and territorial cohesion within the Union as well as to reflect the new areas of competence introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.

4. During that same period a number of important multi-annual EU programmes, policies and funds, which are designed to contribute to future growth and prosperity in the EU, are to be negotiated .
5. In order to maintain and strengthen its influence and role in a world which is characterised by a shifting balance of power, the EU will need to reassess its efforts and action with regard to its external relations. At the same time, the EU will have to respond to global challenges and developments such as environmental degradation, climate change, resource scarcity, pressure on biodiversity, international migration, poverty and the challenge of feeding a rapidly growing global population and of accommodating their legitimate material development needs.
6. During the 18-month term, the following areas will be of strategic importance for achieving the EU's long-term goals by 2020 and to enhance its role on the international stage.
7. Over the last years, Europe has gone through a severe economic crisis, entailing negative growth rates, rising unemployment and increasing pressure on public finances and on social cohesion. With a view to overcoming the consequences of the crisis, efforts will be enhanced in order to recreate sustainable public finances, remedy structural weaknesses and improve competitiveness within the Union. Implementing exit strategies, including fiscal consolidation, will remain high on the agenda. The need for reinforced economic policy coordination and enhancing economic governance will be further addressed and implemented.

8. In order to ensure that the EU will emerge stronger from the crisis by strengthening its international competitiveness, the Europe 2020 Strategy will need to be implemented in an efficient way by Member States and the European Institutions. The focus will be on a smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. In this context, the Union will promote a new source of growth such as intellectual capital and a green, more resource efficient, and knowledge-based economy that is able to respond to long-term economic and social challenges and challenges which are related to climate change, energy sufficiency and the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity. The Euro Plus Pact will achieve a new quality of economic policy coordination, with the objective of improving competitiveness, employment, fiscal sustainability and financial stability. Continued efforts will be made with regard to all aspects of the Single Market and the small and medium sized enterprises which are the backbone of the European economy. Efforts will also be made towards developing a dynamic digital single market. Future economic success will not be possible without increasing investments in research and innovation, education and training. To this end the Union will have to pursue its efforts with regard to the implementation of the "knowledge triangle"-concept and the creation of a true European Research Area, which allows for a reduction of policy fragmentation and the free movement of researchers. Developing a strategic and integrated approach to innovation and optimising the synergy between the European, national and regional policies as well as ensuring a better involvement of stakeholders in the innovation process and supporting the full use of Europe's intellectual capital are important in this context.
  
9. One of the main activities during the 18-month term will be the negotiations on the new Multi-annual Financial Framework which need to be concluded before the end of 2012 in order to allow for a timely adoption and implementation of EU policies, programmes and financial instruments. The MFF will have to reflect in a balanced way the needs of existing policies, respond to the new challenges and underpin the priorities arising from the Europe 2020 Strategy. The new MFF will also address the new policies introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.

10. The development of the EU also depends on its acceptance by citizens. In the coming years a new focus on policies which are beneficial to citizens will therefore be vital. These policies, which cover a wide range, will need to take account of the necessary adaptations to a changing international environment as well as of societal challenges such as the demographic change and social cohesion.
11. Against this background the implementation of the social component of the Europe 2020 Strategy and addressing societal challenges will be of great importance in order to achieve inclusive growth. The social and economic well-being of citizens also depends on the investment in human capital, which aims to enhance the access to quality education, to upgrade professional skills and to strengthen lifelong learning, in order to increase employability and inclusive labour market participation. In this context the elaboration and implementation of actions related to youth employment and mobility deserve special attention.
12. The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 will draw attention to the immense demographic challenges our societies are confronted with and will hopefully bring about a sense of urgency for immediate action and trigger a reflection on the necessary responses to the far-reaching societal challenges raised by ageing populations.
13. The Union will also need to be more visible and effective when it comes to policies and living conditions which affect citizens' every day lives. In the field of health, the EU Health Strategy, the new Public Health Programme and the innovation partnership on healthy ageing will respond to the demographic change, health determinants, innovations in healthcare aimed at sustaining healthcare systems and alleviating global health threats.
14. Promoting food quality and safety as well as safety in relation to consumer products are important areas where the action at the level of the Union represents a direct and genuine added value for European citizens.

15. Being aware of its common cultural heritage, the Union will continue to give particular attention to culture. Its action in this area will also help promote active citizenship, promote creative and cultural industries and at the same time enhance cultural governance.
16. Achieving **sustainable growth** requires an integrated approach with respect to policies on climate change, transport, agriculture, environment and energy, aiming at **resource efficiency**. To this end efforts will continue to promote a competitive Union based on low carbon and greening economies.
17. In line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, one of the fundamental objectives over the coming years will be the promotion of green growth through a sustainable and efficient use of resources. This approach and related governance issues will also be promoted and defended at international level in the most important fora such as the Rio + 20 Summit.
18. In the field of environment protection, the EU will renew its Environmental Action Programme In this context special emphasis will be given to biodiversity issues at European and international level, aiming at a significant improvement of the status of biodiversity with new targets to be implemented by 2020 and 2050.
19. In the area of international climate change negotiations, the three Presidencies will continue to work on the follow-up to the agreement on climate change reached in the UNFCCC Conference in Cancun and will prepare the forthcoming Conference in Durban. The Union will deploy all its means and endeavours to contribute to achieving an international climate change agreement for the period post 2012. The adoption and further work on the EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy will complement the work on climate change mitigation.

20. Efforts to combat climate change are closely linked to energy and transport policies. On the basis of a number of policy initiatives, including actions under the EU flagship initiative on resource efficiency, the Energy Efficiency Plan, the Energy Roadmap 2050, and the 2050 low carbon economy roadmap and the White Paper Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area, the Union will further discuss ideas and actions with a view to reducing emissions by 80-95% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels.
21. Energy infrastructure, security and efficiency, renewable energy, the internal energy market and the external action in the field of energy will continue to be cornerstones of EU level activities. In the light of the nuclear accident in Japan, the review of the safety of nuclear plants will be of major importance.
22. In the area of Justice and Home Affairs, the implementation of the Stockholm Programme will remain a key priority for the Union. The overall challenge will be to ensure respect for fundamental freedoms and integrity while guaranteeing security. The priorities of the Stockholm Programme will be reflected in all action taken. Furthermore, the situation in the Southern Mediterranean will effectively be dealt with. The achievement of a consolidated European area of justice with mechanisms that facilitate access to justice, allowing citizens to benefit from their rights throughout the EU, data protection and the fight against all aspects of organised crime are constant concerns and will remain in the focus of the Union's policies.
23. The Union will also pursue the implementation of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum with a view to developing a forward looking and comprehensive European Immigration Policy and will work towards the completion of the Common European Asylum System by the end of 2012.
24. Work on improving the European response capacities to face disasters and crises, both in the EU and in third countries, will be taken forward, taking into account the necessary balance between prevention, preparedness and response.

25. The EU remains an anchor of stability and prosperity that continues to attract European countries. A gradual and well managed enlargement process, based on agreed principles and the Copenhagen criteria, allows all countries concerned to reap benefits. Against this background, the negotiations underway will be pursued and the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries will be further advanced.
26. Within the framework of the neighbourhood policy, the EU will further develop and consolidate its relations with the countries to the East and to the South of the Union, with the aim of contributing to the stability and prosperity of these regions. In this context, the implementation of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy will also be pursued.
27. During the coming years, the Union will also face manifold challenges regarding its role in the world. The balance of economic and political power in the world will continue to undergo fundamental changes. Emerging powers will challenge the transatlantic relationship as the centre of gravity on the global scene, thus also affecting the Union's political weight and role in the world.
28. To be able to exert influence that reflects its weight, the EU must have a coherent and consistent policy in its external relations. To this end the Union will make full use of the new structures, tools and possibilities established and provided for by the Lisbon Treaty such as the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service.
29. As the world's largest trading area, the Union needs to play an even more central role in the regulation of economic, financial and trade issues in the G20, the WTO and other relevant multilateral fora.

30. As the world's largest donor of development aid, the EU is well placed to promote European values and interests, to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth, and to continue to implement the international financing for development agenda and further enhance the effectiveness of EU aid. The EU will continue to promote the Millennium Development Goals with the ultimate goal of eradicating poverty by 2015. In this context, the EU will continue to pursue the reform and strengthening of its Development and Humanitarian assistance policies.
  
31. It will be vital for the Union to develop further its strategic partnerships with key players in the world, which will remain a useful instrument for pursuing European objectives and interests. It will also be important to further develop regional frameworks and strategies in order to ensure the EU's continued role in solving regional and global challenges, while promoting growth, prosperity and security. In this context, the transatlantic relationship will continue to be a key element of EU's external policies in order to be able to face new challenges such as the emergence of new global players.
  
32. The European Union will also, in line with the UN Charter, continue to play an undeniably important role in the area of security, crisis management and combating global terrorism.

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## EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

42. Employment and poverty reduction remain an important part of economic strategies, contributing to strong and sustainable growth. This underlines the urgent need for coherence between all macro-economic policies at all levels of governance and employment policies and recognition of their role in achieving sustainable job-creating economic growth.
43. In the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and in particular the "European semester", the Presidencies will make sure that the EPSCO Council contributes in an effective manner to achieving the objectives of the Strategy.
44. In the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy the contributions of the social partners at European and national level are important for achieving the overarching objectives. In this respect the three Presidencies aim at enhancing the role and visibility of the Tripartite Social Summit.
45. The three Presidencies will focus on various aspects of Europe's demographic challenges.

### Employment/Labour market issues

46. Member States' employment policies are a significant element in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. In this context, the implementation of the Strategy's flagship initiative "An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs" will be a priority. At European level, the coordination and guidance of Member States' employment policies and their peer review are included in the European Employment Strategy, which includes as its main tools the Employment Guidelines and the country-specific recommendations (CSR) for Member States' employment policies. The Employment Guidelines, decided in 2010 and addressed to all Member States, should in principle remain stable until 2014, although these Guidelines have to be reviewed and confirmed annually. In accordance with Article 148(4) TFEU, the Council can also issue recommendations to Member States on their employment policies if considered appropriate.

## Labour law

47. As for the legislative activities, the Presidencies will start work on proposals expected to be submitted by the Commission during the period under consideration, in particular the proposal to amend several labour law Directives with a view of including seafaring workers or vessels within their scope and a possible proposal revising the Working Time Directive; a possible proposal amending the Directive on the protection of employees in the event of insolvency of their employer; possible proposals revising the Directive supplementing the Statute for a European company and the Directive supplementing the Statute for a European Cooperative Society with regard to the involvement of employees and finally a new legislative initiative concerning the Directive on Posting of Workers, with the aim, in particular, to improve the implementation of the Directive.
48. In cooperation with other policy sectors (Justice and Home Affairs/MIG), the three Presidencies will contribute to the discussions, from an employment perspective, on the proposals for Directives on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State; the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of seasonal employment and on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer.

## Health and safety at work

49. The Council will continue its work on the amendment of the Directive on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding ("maternity leave"), with a view to reaching final agreement with the European Parliament. The present Community Strategy on Health and Safety at Work for the years 2007-2012 will need to be renewed. Work on the new Strategy, which is expected to be presented in 2012, will be expeditiously taken forward. In 2011, the Council and the European Parliament will start discussions on amending the Directive on Electromagnetic fields (EMF) with the aim to have the new Directive adopted by April 2012.
50. In 2012, three other subjects in the field of health and safety at work are expected to be dealt with by the Council: recasting legislation on musculo-skeletal disorders at work, an initiative on tobacco smoke at work and the amendment of five Directives as a result of the adoption of the Regulation on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures.

## Social policy issues

51. In the area of social inclusion and social protection, the Presidencies will ensure an appropriate follow-up to the Commission's initiatives and proposals as outlined in its communication regarding the "European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion". In this context, particular attention will be paid to the issue of how best to adapt the Open Method of Coordination to the new governance of the Europe 2020 Strategy and to the assessment of the implementation of active inclusion strategies at national level. The work on the proposal amending the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems and on the implementing Regulation will be continued. The development of common principles and effective monitoring tools to combat and prevent child poverty will be on the agenda of the Council as well as the development of conditions for a better integration of third country nationals of different cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to participate actively in European economies and societies. Another important issue to be examined is the promotion of social innovation.

52. The White Paper on Pensions, to be presented by the Commission in the second half of 2011, will be a key document in promoting reflection on adequacy, sustainability and reform of national pension systems.

#### Equality between women and men and anti-discrimination

53. Gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union and goes hand in hand with other strategies for growth, prosperity and welfare. Therefore, in keeping with the Treaty provisions, equality between women and men and the fight against all forms of discrimination will continue to be given both general and specific attention. Gender mainstreaming will be promoted, including within the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which set an employment rate target of 75% for women and men. Efforts to advance gender equality will be guided by the Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) as well as by the adapted European Pact for Gender Equality.
54. The Presidencies will in particular focus on the following themes: women and the economy, including the reconciliation of work and family life, e.g. paternity leave; female employment, including the quality of women's jobs; gender equality and management; gender and educational choices; women and the environment as well as combating violence against women. The Presidencies will continue to work on the proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Efforts will be pursued to advance the social and economic inclusion of marginalised groups in line with the commitments that the Council has made in recent years.

## External dimension of EU employment and social policies

55. The global financial and economic crisis has led to an intensification of international activities to address the consequences of the crisis in several policy areas, including employment and social policy. This includes enhancing policy dialogues on employment and social issues in international fora such as the International Labour Organisation/United Nations, G20 and the OECD. The International Labour Organisation's *Global Jobs Pact* is considered a central element of the global consensus on the role of employment and social policies in mitigating the impact of the crisis and as central for sustainable recovery and growth. In this regard, the three Presidencies will support actions to be taken at several levels and in different fora.

## Demography and family policies

56. The Presidencies will ensure an appropriate follow-up to the Commission's "Demography Update" (2011). These topics will be of a cross-cutting nature and dealt with also within other policy domains.
57. Family policies will, among other issues such as social exclusion and child poverty, be one of the topics of the Commission Communication on Demography. In this context, the Presidencies will use the "European Alliance for Families", created in 2007, which is an instrument dealing with a variety of cross-cutting subjects.

## Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

58. 2012 will be the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. Throughout the year, the three Presidencies will promote active participation in society and the labour market in order to allow older people to use their full potential, by improving working conditions, health and safety at work, adapting lifelong learning systems to the needs of an ageing workforce and ensuring adequate social protection systems. The Presidencies will aim to ensure coherence between this and the 2011 European Year of Volunteering.

## Public health

59. In the field of public health, the three Presidencies will promote actions aimed at improving the health of citizens, their protection against cross-border health threats and the quality of healthcare provided. This will be done in line with the Council Conclusion of June 2006 on common values and principles in European Union Health Systems and the EU Health Strategy for 2008-2013. The three Presidencies will launch work on a possible EU Health Strategy beyond 2013 and on the third programme of EU action in the field of health.
60. Non-communicable diseases and healthy ageing, diseases without borders and innovation and best practice will be the three headlines encompassing the health priorities of the trio Presidency:
61. The three Presidencies will pay special attention to non-communicable diseases and healthy ageing. Non-communicable diseases pose an increasing challenge for the health care systems in the entire European Union. Emphasis will be given to health from early childhood, as a prerequisite and integral part of a healthy ageing process. In the area of health determinants, special attention will be given to anti-tobacco policies, nutrition and physical activity, rare diseases and alcohol related harm. In this respect, the revision of Directive 2001/37/EC concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products (“Tobacco Products Directive”) is envisaged. The Presidencies will prepare the 5th Conference of the Parties under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, scheduled to take place in the autumn 2012. A possible Commission proposal for a revision of the EU strategy on alcohol and health could be also be discussed

62. The three Presidencies will focus on diseases without borders for the protection of EU citizens from cross-border health threats in EU and neighbouring countries. Furthermore, a discussion will be undertaken regarding the “Health Security Package” aiming at the development of a long-term solution for health security in the EU, notably by reviewing the existing structures under a possible new mandate of the Health Security Committee (HSC) and an update of the Decision 2119/98/EC on communicable diseases and Regulation 852/2004 establishing the European Centre for Disease prevention and Control and reinforcing the cooperation at EU level on serious cross-border health threats, regardless of the origin of the threat (biological, chemical, radio-nuclear etc.).
63. The issue of antimicrobial resistance remains a major concern in the EU as well as internationally. The Commission is expected to present a comprehensive strategy for reducing the antimicrobial resistance which will be followed up with concrete action during the 18 month term.
64. The three Presidencies will wherever possible cooperate with WHO and other relevant international health organisations in order to enhance efforts on important health issues.
65. The three Presidencies will focus on how innovation and best practice in the health care sector can mitigate the challenges of the demographic change in the EU Member States, talking into account the present financial situation in Europe. This offers a great opportunity to the EU’s health care industry, for which the trio Presidency will actively seek to promote an attractive business environment by making the legislative framework less cumbersome and more efficient without compromising patient safety. Innovative approaches to healthcare will be explored, as a cost effective way to meet the healthcare needs of the European citizens.
66. Furthermore, due attention will be paid to the e-health action plan on the basis of a communication and roadmap to be submitted by the Commission.
67. Spreading out best practice in the health care sector can help to close the existing health gaps when it comes to health within the European Union.

68. The three Presidencies will take forward the work on the proposals amending Regulation (EC) 726/2004 and Directive 2001/83/EC as regards information to the general public on medicinal products for human use subject to medical prescription. During the trio Presidency the Council will actively engage with the following proposals: revision of the Directive 2001/20/EC on clinical trials<sup>1</sup>, Regulation 297/95 on fees payable to the European Agency for the evaluation of medicinal products<sup>2</sup>, draft new Regulation or Directive replacing the Directives 90/385/EEC, 93/42/EEC and 98/79/EC on medical devices<sup>3</sup> and a revision of Directive 2001/82/EC on veterinary medicinal products<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, a proposal for the revision of the Directive 89/105/EEC on transparency of measures regulating the pricing of medicinal products<sup>5</sup> is expected to be submitted during the period under consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2001/20/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 April 2001 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to the implementation of good clinical practice in the conduct of clinical trials on medicinal products for human use.

<sup>2</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 297/95 of 10 February 1995 on fees payable to the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products.

<sup>3</sup> Directives 90/385/EEC, 93/42/EEC and 98/79/EEC.

<sup>4</sup> Directive 2001/82/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to veterinary medicinal products.

<sup>5</sup> Council Directive 89/105/EEC of 21 December 1988 relating to the transparency of measures regulating the prices of medicinal products for human use and their inclusion in the scope of national health insurance systems.

## Consumer protection

69. The three Presidencies will be dedicated to promoting a high level of protection of consumers, also with a view to reinforcing the internal market.
70. Work will be launched on two forthcoming proposals which aim at reviewing existing legislation, namely the 90/314/EC on package travel and the Directive on general product safety. The work on these proposals will continue throughout the whole period.
71. The three Presidencies will start work on proposals to be submitted by the Commission, e.g. on Alternative Dispute Resolution or European Contract Law.
72. The Communication on the new Consumer Policy Strategy 2014-2020 which will define the priorities in the field of consumer protection beyond 2013 is expected to be presented by the Commission during the second half of 2011.
73. In the field of international co-operation on protection and promotion of consumer rights, the Presidencies will aim to conclude the two co-operation agreements between the European Union and the United States of America, namely on the enforcement of consumer protection laws and on cooperation and information exchange in the area of consumer product safety.